

first step, but it won't fix Colombia's problems overnight.

You would hope that an international trade agreement would bring jobs with it. To give my colleagues some idea why there are problems with the Colombia FTA, the U.S. International Trade Commission doesn't predict that the Colombia FTA would create jobs. Now, the U.S. International Trade Commission always predicts very high and lofty job creation numbers for trade agreements, but even they are skeptical. That alone should be evidence for my colleagues that now is not the time for the Colombia free trade agreement.

Congress should be focused on creating jobs, and this trade agreement doesn't pass the smell test, although the Colombia FTA does stink when you consider that it is hardworking middle class families who will pay the price with this unfair trade agreement.

The Colombia FTA will kill jobs, drive down American wages, and drive small American companies that face unfair competition out of business. We can do better. I urge my colleagues to stop settling for not so bad and pursue a trade policy that means prosperity for everyone.

#### GREAT LAKES THREATENED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes are one of the most overlooked and unappreciated national assets. They are the largest source of freshwater in the world and contain 20 percent of the freshwater on Earth.

The Great Lakes face many challenges. Agricultural runoff, sewer overflows, and other pollution makes its way into the Great Lakes from across the northeast and the Midwest, leading to unsafe water quality and public health concerns. Also, invasive species hitch a ride in the ballast water of oceangoing vessels, like the zebra mussel, or swim up the Mississippi River, like the Asian carp, and threaten to alter the lakes' fragile, closed ecosystem.

In recognition of the importance of the Great Lakes and to combat the threats to their health, in 2010, 11 Federal agencies announced a plan to implement the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an ambitious action plan to remove toxins, clean up the lakes, and protect them from further pollution and invasive species.

I am concerned that funding for this important program has been uneven. It was funded at \$475 million in fiscal year 2010, fell to \$300 million this year, and is funded at just \$250 million in the fiscal year 2012 Interior Appropriations bill the House will consider next week.

However, the mere existence of this special cleanup funding is evidence that Congress and the administration recognize the Great Lakes are a unique natural resource that deserves protection.

In 1969, the Cuyahoga River famously caught fire, symbolizing the abysmal water quality of the water in the Great Lakes basin. Legislation from the Clean Water Act and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has gone a long way toward returning the lakes to good health. However, the Great Lakes face a new threat beyond water quality: the diversion or removal of water from the Great Lakes basin.

In recognition that due to national and global trends, the value of freshwater will increase, as will the incentive to remove it from the Great Lakes, the eight States that border the Great Lakes entered into a compact with each other and two Canadian provinces on the use of Great Lakes water. Congress ratified the agreement, and it was signed into law by President Bush in 2008.

Among the most important provisions of the compact are restriction on the removal or diversion of water from the Great Lakes basin. The underlying goal was to prevent any one State from plundering the freshwater in the Great Lakes.

So it is with great concern that I learned yesterday that the Ohio State legislature had passed legislation to permit businesses to remove 5 million gallons of water a day from Lake Erie. In New York, we are about to adopt a far more reasonable limit by requiring a permit for the withdrawal of 100,000 gallons per day. The Ohio bill, if adopted, would violate the spirit of the historic Great Lakes compact and force a race to the bottom among the eight signatory States, which will result in an accelerated level of diversions and further reduce the water level in the Great Lakes beyond the impact of Ohio businesses. Such an outcome is unacceptable.

The consequence of such a large scale removal of water from the Great Lakes basin would have a devastating environmental and economic impact in my community. Water levels in the Great Lakes are already on the decline, and the additional large-scale removal of water will lead to algae blooms and reduced water quality, negatively impacting aquatic wildlife and the associated fishing industry, and reduce recreational boating and commercial shipping activities.

In my community of western New York, this action would threaten the progress we are making in Buffalo toward reclaiming the waterfront as an engine of recreational and economic opportunities.

I wrote to Ohio Governor John Kasich yesterday encouraging that he conclude, as have his predecessors Bob Taft and George Voinovich, that this legislation poses a danger to the health of our greatest regional asset, and suggesting that he veto this ill-advised legislation. I hope that he will heed that advice so advocates for the Great Lakes can focus attention on the restoration initiative and on cleaning up the lakes instead of having to fight to

protect them from massive withdrawals of freshwater for profit when the issue was supposed to have been settled years ago.

Now more than ever, it is critical that the Great Lakes remain vigilant and united against the threat of water diversion.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Reverend Dr. George Dillard, Peachtree City Christian Church, Peachtree City, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, give us the strength to prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor, gladly doing Your will. Bless our Nation with individuals who give honorable service, who live with integrity and govern with honesty.

Save us from prejudice, confusion, pride, arrogance, and evil. Help us that we might see truth and seek it. Defend liberty and fashion a united people out of many people and languages.

Grant us wisdom for those entrusted with the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace, and through obedience to Your law we may show Your praise among the nations. Remind us, though the rule of law is the foundation of our society, laws without justice are empty words. In prosperity fill us with thankfulness; in trouble remind us to trust in You. Thank You for those brave individuals who stand in the gap protecting our lives and liberty.

Lead us to faith in You, to good character, knowledge, discipline, patience, and love for others. Draw us together as one Nation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.